

THE GILT LIST

Fantasy *Query Tracker*

A record of every submission, request and response,
in one place.

THIS TRACKER BELONGS TO

MANUSCRIPT TITLE

QUERYING SINCE

AGENTS ON MY LIST

8 agent records

4 batch plans

54 longlist slots

Print or fill on screen

THEGILTLIST.COM

How to use this tracker

Read this once, then you can stop thinking about the admin.

Querying is slow and the feedback you get is thin. Most rejections carry no information at all, so the only reliable signal comes from patterns across a lot of submissions. That is what this tracker is for. Fifty queries with no requests points at the query letter. Requests that turn into passes points at the manuscript. Those two situations need different responses, and you cannot tell them apart from memory.

1

Fill in the Project Snapshot first

It records which version of your query, synopsis and pages is currently out with agents. This matters as soon as you start revising partway through.

2

Query in batches

Eight to ten agents at a time. Each batch gets a planning page so you can see what you changed and what happened as a result.

3

Use both pages of the agent record

The left page when you send, the right page when they reply. Paste rejections in exactly as written, because the wording is the only evidence you get.

4

Review after each batch closes

Wait for a batch to finish before changing anything. Revising after two or three rejections tells you nothing, because two or three rejections are not a pattern.

5

Reprint what you run out of

There are eight agent records and four batch plans here. Most writers query more agents than that, so print extra copies of the pages you use up.

RECORDING REJECTIONS

Write down what the agent actually said and what stage they reached, not how it felt. A form pass on a query is information about your first few hundred words and nothing else.

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Project Snapshot

The current details of the book you are querying. Update it when anything changes.

THE BOOK

NOVEL TITLE

GENRE

SUBGENRE

AGE CATEGORY

POSITIONING

COMP ONE

COMP TWO

ONE-LINE PITCH

CURRENT VERSION

QUERY VERSION

WORD COUNT

LAST UPDATED

READINESS

SELF-EDIT ROUNDS

BETA READERS

SENSITIVITY READ

PROFESSIONAL EDIT

THE PLAN

DATE QUERYING STARTED

TARGET NUMBER OF AGENTS

BATCH SIZE

I WILL REASSESS AFTER

WHAT THIS BOOK PROMISES A READER

the reason someone would pick it up

Version Log

Number each version as you go and write the number on the agent record when you send. Months later this is the only way to know which draft a given agent actually read.

Use simple numbers rather than dates, and only start a new version when something meaningful changes. Fixing a typo is not a new version. Rewriting the second paragraph is.

Agent Longlist

Research agents here first. Nothing is sent until the batch is ready.

#	AGENT	AGENCY	OPEN?	WHAT THEY WANT	CLIENT OR COMP MATCH	REPLY TIME	TIER	BATCH
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								
26								
27								

USING THE TIER COLUMN

A is a strong fit with clear evidence behind it. B is a good fit. C is possible but less certain. Include all three levels in every batch so that no single send carries too much weight.

Agent Longlist

Research agents here first. Nothing is sent until the batch is ready.

#	AGENT	AGENCY	OPEN?	WHAT THEY WANT	CLIENT OR COMP MATCH	REPLY TIME	TIER	BATCH
28								
29								
30								
31								
32								
33								
34								
35								
36								
37								
38								
39								
40								
41								
42								
43								
44								
45								
46								
47								
48								
49								
50								
51								
52								
53								
54								

CHECK BEFORE ADDING ANYONE

Confirm the agency is open to queries, the agent still works there, and they have sold something in your category recently. Listing sites go out of date quickly, so check the agency website itself.

Batch Plan

One page per batch, so you can see what you changed and what happened.

THIS BATCH

WHAT I AM TESTING (NEW OPENING, REVISED QUERY, FIRST SEND)

DATE SENT

QUERY VERSION

REVIEW THIS BATCH ON

AGENTS IN THIS BATCH

#	AGENT	AGENCY	SENT	MATERIALS	REPLY BY	OUTCOME	DAYS
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

RESULTS

complete this once the batch has closed

QUERIES OUT

REQUESTS

NO RESPONSE

WHAT I AM CHANGING BEFORE THE NEXT BATCH

WHAT CHANGED SINCE THE LAST BATCH

Wait until most of this batch has closed before sending the next one. Otherwise you use up agents on a version you were already planning to change.

Batch Plan

One page per batch, so you can see what you changed and what happened.

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WHAT I AM TESTING (NEW OPENING, REVISED QUERY, FIRST SEND)

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QUERY VERSION

REVIEW THIS BATCH ON

AGENTS IN THIS BATCH

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Wait until most of this batch has closed before sending the next one. Otherwise you use up agents on a version you were already planning to change.

AGENT NAME		AGENCY	
AGENCY WEBSITE		SUBMISSION PAGE OR PORTAL	
WISH LIST	INSTAGRAM	X / TWITTER	BLUESKY
NEWSLETTER			

☐ Represents fantasy ☐ Represents romantasy ☐ Right age category
☐ Client I admire ☐ Comp title match ☐ Wish list match

WHAT THEY WANT	FORMAT	STATED RESPONSE TIME
NO REPLY MEANS NO?	EXCLUSIVE?	CLOSED TO QUERIES FROM

DATE SENT	BATCH NUMBER	QUERY VERSION
EXPECTED REPLY DATE	FOLLOW UP ON	SENT VIA

☐ Query ☐ Synopsis ☐ First 5 pages ☐ First 10 pages

☐ First 3 chapters ☐ First 50 pages ☐ Full manuscript ☐ Other

Agent Record

RESPONSE

☐ No reply ☐ Form pass ☐ Personal pass ☐ Partial ☐ Full ☐ R&R ☐ Offer

DATE OF REPLY

DAYS WAITED

DEADLINE THEY GAVE ME

EXACTLY WHAT THEY WROTE

copy it word for word

WHAT THIS SUGGESTS

☐ Taste ☐ Query issue ☐ Opening pages ☐ The middle
☐ The ending ☐ Market ☐ Timing ☐ Not enough data yet

NOTES

NEXT ACTION

☐ Nothing ☐ Keep querying ☐ Revise the query ☐ Revise the opening
☐ Revise the manuscript ☐ Follow up ☐ Follow up again ☐ Close

CLOSED

DATE CLOSED

WOULD I QUERY THEM AGAIN?

NOTES FOR NEXT TIME

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WHY I CHOSE THEM

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THE SPECIFIC REASON

THEIR GUIDELINES

taken from the agency website

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FORMAT

STATED RESPONSE TIME

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FOLLOW UP ON

SENT VIA

MATERIALS SENT

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WHAT I SAID IN THE PERSONALIZATION, AND ANYTHING TO REMEMBER

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CLOSED

DATE CLOSED

WOULD I QUERY THEM AGAIN?

NOTES FOR NEXT TIME

Full & Partial Request Tracker

Everything an agent has asked to read, and where it currently stands.

A request means the query and the opening did their job. What happens after that is a separate question, so it is worth tracking on its own rather than losing it among the rejections.

#	AGENT	PARTIAL OR FULL	REQUESTED	SENT	REPLY EXPECTED	FOLLOW UP	OUTCOME	DAYS OUT
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								

FEEDBACK REPEATED ACROSS MORE THAN ONE REQUEST

only count it once several people have said the same thing

FOLLOWING UP

Several months on a full is normal. Follow up once, after the stated response time has passed by a clear margin, and keep the message short. Check the agency guidelines first, since some state a preferred waiting period.

Offer Tracker

For recording offers of representation and the calls that come with them.

#	OFFER DATE	AGENT	AGENCY	CALL DATE	DEADLINE GIVEN	OTHERS NOTIFIED	DECISION
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON THE CALL

tick each one as you ask it

☐ What do you like about the book?

☐ How many rounds of edits do you usually do?

☐ How many clients are on your list?

☐ What happens if this book does not sell?

☐ How does the agency handle foreign, film and audio?

☐ Can I speak to two of your current clients?

☐ What editorial changes would you want first?

☐ Which editors would you submit to, and why?

☐ How and how often do you communicate?

☐ Do you represent careers or single projects?

☐ What is the commission, and is there an agreement?

☐ What are you seeing in the market for this genre?

MY OWN QUESTIONS

COMPARING MORE THAN ONE OFFER

COMPARE	AGENT ONE	AGENT TWO	AGENT THREE
Edit vision			
Sub strategy			
Communication			
Overall fit			

NOTES FROM THE CALL

Results by Batch

A summary of what each batch produced, so you can compare them against each other.

BATCH	QUERIES OUT	FORM PASS	PERSONAL PASS	PARTIALS	FULLS	R&RS	OFFERS	NOREPLY	REQUESTS
01									
02									
03									
04									
05									
06									
07									
08									
09									
10									
TOTAL									

QUERIES SENT IN TOTAL

across all batches

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME

of the replies you received

LONGEST OUTSTANDING

days since sending

READING THIS TABLE

Request rates in fantasy and romantasy are low, and many agents request from a very small fraction of the queries they receive. Compare your batches against each other rather than against a benchmark, and look for changes that follow a revision.

WHAT I CHANGED AS A RESULT

What Rejections Usually Mean

Common wording, and what it tends to indicate across a number of submissions.

Most rejections are brief and standardized, so a single one rarely tells you anything. The readings below are only useful once the same wording has appeared several times. Use them as a guide when you review a batch, not as a response to any one email.

WHAT THEY WROTE	WHAT IT USUALLY INDICATES	WHAT TO DO
"Not the right fit for my list"	A standard form pass. It usually carries no information about the manuscript.	Record it and continue.
"I didn't connect with the voice"	The prose or narration did not hold their attention. Subjective once, less so repeated.	If it repeats, reread page one.
"The market is difficult for this"	The comps or the hook read as something currently hard to sell.	Review comps and positioning.
"I wasn't pulled in as quickly as I'd hoped"	The opening takes too long to give the reader something to follow.	Look at the first chapter.
"Good premise, the execution didn't work for me"	The query is performing better than the pages, which is a specific and fixable gap.	Consider a structural read.
"Another agent would be a better champion"	They liked it without feeling strongly enough to take it on.	Keep querying for now.
"I'd be happy to see future projects"	This is usually meant literally.	Note it for your next book.
Detailed notes on a full	The agent spent unpaid time on the manuscript, which is worth taking seriously.	Read it more than once before acting.
No response	Usually volume or a stated no-reply policy rather than a judgment.	Check their guidelines and close it out.

WORDING I HAVE SEEN MORE THAN ONCE

Editorial services

Developmental editing for fantasy and romantasy, from someone who reads the genre.

If this tracker has shown you a pattern and you want a second opinion on what is causing it, these are the three ways I work with writers. All of it is genre-specific work on fantasy, romantasy and urban fantasy, focused on structure, pacing and reader expectation rather than line-level polish.

First chapter critique

For queries that are getting requests which then turn into passes, or no requests at all. I read the opening pages the way an agent reads them and tell you what the chapter is promising, where attention drops, and what to change first.

[thegiltlist.com / first-chapter-critiques-fantasy-romantasy](https://thegiltlist.com/first-chapter-critiques-fantasy-romantasy)

Manuscript critique

A full read with a written report on structure, pacing, character arc and the points where a reader is most likely to stop. Useful when fulls are coming back as warm passes and you cannot tell why.

[thegiltlist.com / fantasy-manuscript-critique-affordable-edit](https://thegiltlist.com/fantasy-manuscript-critique-affordable-edit)

Developmental editing

The deeper option. A full structural edit with a revision plan, working through the manuscript in detail rather than summarizing it. For books that are close but need a clear order of work.

[thegiltlist.com / developmental-editing-fantasy-romantasy](https://thegiltlist.com/developmental-editing-fantasy-romantasy)

FREE ON THE SITE

Craft guides for fantasy and romantasy writers

[thegiltlist.com / writing-craft-guides-fantasy-romantasy](https://thegiltlist.com/writing-craft-guides-fantasy-romantasy)

Novel plot beat planner

[thegiltlist.com / novel-plot-beat-planner](https://thegiltlist.com/novel-plot-beat-planner)

How to query a fantasy novel

[thegiltlist.com / how-to-query-a-fantasy-novel](https://thegiltlist.com/how-to-query-a-fantasy-novel)

Fantasy plot and story idea generator

[thegiltlist.com / fantasy-plot-story-idea-generator](https://thegiltlist.com/fantasy-plot-story-idea-generator)